



April 2026

Contents

From the Chair

From the President

Countdown to Conference 2026

New Zealand Journal of Music Therapy

Principles for Ethical Musical Practice in Aotearoa New Zealand

Music Therapy Week 2026

Mauri Tui Tuia and North Haven Hospice: Music therapy to support palliative care

Finding Joy and Connection Through Music: A Music Therapy Pilot at Puāwananga Teen Parent Unit

In memorandum: Barbara Mabbett

In memorandum: Barbara Wheeler

Sir Roy McKenzie Scholarships 2026

Global Music Therapy Study

From the Chair

Tēnā tātou katoa

The last few weeks have certainly been challenging on a global and domestic scale as geopolitical events have played out causing both human suffering and economic suffering in communities.



Image description: Profile picture
Stephen Guerin

While these events are not ones we can change it was very pleasing to see the number of events held through Music Therapy week connecting communities in a number of different ways. Our congratulations and thanks to the organisers of these events which take commitment to host, as well as the planning that goes into the leadup to this week.

Speaking of planning and my opening comments in regard to community, considerable effort is going into the planning for our Conference for 2026 which will be in Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland, 12- 13 September. Our theme, Te Poutama Hononga: Weaving Connections, celebrates the art of weaving together people, stories, and music, creating patterns of understanding, and community.

We hope to see you there!

Ngā mihi nui

Regards
Stephen Guerin

From the President

Congratulations and thank you to all who continue to be involved in supporting MThNZ in such a wide range of positive ways.

The tributes in this issue of MusT to both Barbara Mabbett and Barbara Wheeler are wonderful examples of how these two people made a significant contribution to our past and early development as a national organisation.



Image description: Profile picture
Linda Webb MNZM

The former Barbara had a notable impact on my early involvement in Music Therapy NZ from a governance point of view and I was privileged to attend her memorial service in Walkworth.

The theme for Music Therapy Week 2026 was 'Weaving Connections | Te Poutama Hononga' and focused on the power of music therapy to break down barriers, build connections, and build on individual and community identities in a global context. Further to Stephen's mention of challenges we all face with global events that are having a ripple effect on us all, it is times like this that our support of family, friends, colleagues and our immediate communities are so important. I am very sure that everything music therapists contribute to their client's wellbeing and meeting their everchanging needs is much appreciated and beneficial to the challenges their whanau and communities face.

Likewise, gathering for the conference this year in Auckland 12-13 September will provide an important opportunity to share new ideas and innovative approaches to meet your clients everchanging needs, and to support each other personally and professionally. I look forward to joining the AGM online from Europe where I will be attending a family gathering in Spain.

Take care

Kindest regards
Linda Webb MNZM
MThNZ President



Countdown to Conference 2026



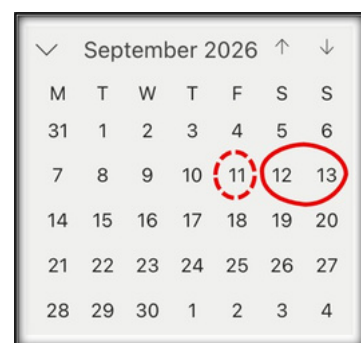
Image description: Front view of university campus buildings
Waipapa Taumata Rau, University of Auckland, Grafton Campus

Welcome to Tāmaki Makarau Auckland and the conference venue – Waipapa Taumata Rau, University of Auckland. The Grafton Campus is near the Auckland Domain, a beautiful green space in our busy city. In this welcome message, you can hear weekday traffic on Park Road – the weekend should be a little more peaceful: <https://youtu.be/TkQbabTJMw4>

Save the Date!

Preparations are well underway for the Music Therapy New Zealand Conference on September 12th and 13th at Waipapa Taumata Rau, University of Auckland (Grafton Campus).

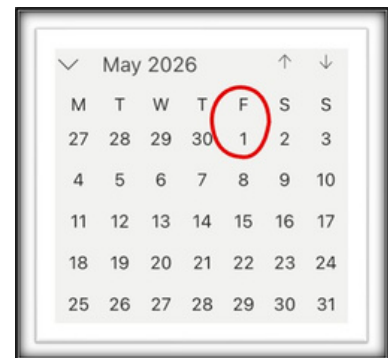
Conference registration is open to everyone – music therapists, other professionals, students, and the public.



Save May 1st too!

On May 1st our full programme will be announced and earlybird registration opens. Full registration fees apply from July 1st.

This is an in-person only conference. If you are travelling to conference, we recommend that you book flights as early as possible, because of rising costs.



Pre-Conference Events at the Raukatauri Music Therapy Centre

On Friday evening, September 11th, Raukatauri Music Therapy Trust and Music Therapy New Zealand will hold an evening reception at the Raukatauri Music Therapy Centre, Grafton. Please register for this when you register for conference.



Raukatauri are also offering a pre-conference workshop for music therapists and students. This is separate from the conference. Further information will be published on May 1st and all registration and inquiries will be via Raukatauri.

Conference Highlights

As already announced, we are excited about our high profile keynote presenters: Katie Pureti NZ RMTh and dance movement therapist Jan McConnell from Mauri Tui Tuia; and Dr Waireti Roestenburg (Ngāti Kahungunu ki Wairoa, Ngāti Pāhauwera, Rongomaiwahine, Ngāpuhi nui-tonu, Dutch, Irish, English). Following Saturday's mihi whakatau and keynote, the day continues with two parallel streams of oral presentations and workshops. The afternoon concludes with a song medley workshop with music therapist JP Young, and brief reflections on Day 1.

The optional Saturday evening conference dinner will be held at Something & Social, 309 Broadway, Newmarket.

Sunday morning begins with an early morning workshop before the MThNZ AGM. The day continues in a single stream with Dr Roestenburg's keynote and two-hour workshop, and further plenary sessions.

We are delighted with the strength and variety of accepted presentations, workshops, and posters, which reflect the conference theme through both cultural topics and a diverse areas of professional practice and research. The conference will also feature a performance by the CeleBRation Choir, led by Jenny Gordon NZ RMTh.

Acknowledgements

Huge thanks to all involved in putting together our conference:

- Everyone who has submitted presentation proposals.
- Conference Committee (including the Programme Subcommittee): Irene van Schalkwyk (Board member), Kathryn Stevenson NZ RMTh, Leesa Tilley (Board member), Rachel Foxell NZ RMTh, and (for a limited time) Rachel Farrell (RMTT).
- Conference Selection Committee: Irene van Schalkwyk (Board member), Kimberley Wade NZ RMTh, May Bee Choo Clulee NZ RMTh, Rachel Foxell NZ RMTh, and Assoc Prof Sarah Hoskyns NZ RMTh.
- Pam Watson (Executive Officer) and Barbara Lewis (Administrator) for phenomenal energy and expertise.
- MThNZ Board and Board Management Group for feedback, advice and support.

Inquiries: Please contact Pam Watson, Executive Officer:
info@musictherapy.org.nz

Dr Alison Talmage (NZ RMTh)
MThNZ Board Member
2026 Conference Convenor



Image description: Music Therapy Te Poutama Hononga | Weaving Connections logo

New Zealand Journal of Music Therapy

The latest issue of the NZJMT, volume 23 (2025), is available online: <https://www.musictherapy.org.nz/journal/2025-2/>. This is our last print edition and MThNZ members should already have received their copy. Going forwards, NZJMT will be available as an online only journal and there will be some changes this year to accommodate this. Each article will have its own page, with a DOI (Digital Object Identifier) and articles will be available for early access as soon as we have completed the editorial process.

Work is already underway for this year's issue. We welcome submissions in a wide variety of genres, with submissions accepted throughout the year. Please refer to the Journal webpage for more information and to access the current Journal Guidelines: <https://www.musictherapy.org.nz/journal/>. You are welcome to contact the editorial team for a preliminary discussion before submitting an article:

journal@musictherapy.org.nz



Image description: Picture of NZ Journal of Music Therapy cover

Principles for Ethical Music Therapy Practice in Aotearoa New Zealand

The New Zealand Music Therapy Registration Board has been reviewing and updating the Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice over recent years. The aim was to have our Code and Standards comparable with recent developments in international music therapy practice while maintaining a distinct New Zealand flavour that embraces recent directions in our society. The Board decided early in the process that it would be beneficial for practitioners, educators, students, kiritaki/clients and other stakeholders to combine our Ethical Principles and Standards of Practice into one document that would ensure both safe and skilled music therapy practice. At various points in the process, we sought advice from NZ RMTs and received and incorporated their feedback; this consultative process was done a number of times.

The primary source documents that provided the foundation for the Board's thinking were:

- Ngā Paerewa Health and Disability Services Standard
- Enabling Good Lives Core Principles
- World Federation of Music Therapy Code of Ethics
- Canadian Association of Music Therapists Code of Ethics

We were also influenced by the frameworks and structures of the following documents:

- Dapaanz Tikanga Matatika/Code of Ethics
- Our Code, Our Standards/Ngā Tikanga Matatika, Ngā Paerewa Teaching Council of Aotearoa New Zealand

At the conclusion of the process the Registration Board engaged Dr Jessica Gerbic, a Clinical Psychologist and Māori cultural advisor, to assess the document for cultural safety, alignment with te Tiriti o Waitangi, and ethical coherence within the Aotearoa context.

Dr Gerbic's extensive and detailed report drew on the four articles of te Tiriti o Waitangi rather than relying solely on the Crown's 3 P's (partnership, participation, protection), which are widely recognised as interpretive. Instead, she suggested focussing on the articles of te Tiriti themselves and their provisions, which are listed below with some context to clinical practice.

Article 1: Kāwanatanga: Crown and governance responsibilities, which guide the Board’s ethical and regulatory obligations to our community.

Article 2: Tino Rangatiratanga: Māori authority over taonga including reo, tikanga, waiata, karakia, mātauranga, and taonga pūoro, which are all guided by tikanga and kawa.

Article 3: Equity: Equity as a binding obligation, not an aspirational goal, meaning equity is an ethical duty for practitioners and leaders, who must identify and remove structural barriers, not just have good intentions.

Article 4: Wairuatanga: The protection of spiritual and cultural practices as integral to hauora and therapeutic work.

In applying these articles, the review emphasised that cultural responsiveness is not only about individual awareness but about structural accountability for our field. The Board considered Dr Gerbic’s consultation to be invaluable and hope that her input, and the document itself, inspire therapists to view their practice through a new lens and consider how they continue to grow and evolve as skilled, ethical, effective practitioners of music therapy.

The final resulting document is the Principles for Ethical Music Therapy Practice in Aotearoa New Zealand. The document is available on the website (<https://www.musictherapy.org.nz/about-mthnz/registration-board-2026/>), or downloaded [here](#).

Jen Glover (NZ RMTh) and Fiona Hearn (NZ RMTh)
Advisor and Chair
NZ Music Therapy Registration Board





MUSIC THERAPY
Te Poutama Hononga
Weaving Connections

Music Therapy Week 2026

April 10th -15th was Music Therapy Week in Aotearoa, a time to celebrate and advocate for the important role Music Therapists have in their communities as well as hear from Music Therapy Participants and their families whose lives and wellbeing have been enriched by Music Therapy.

This year Music Therapy New Zealand ran a series of online webinars hosted by Music Therapists all over the motu on a range of topics. On Friday we had an 'Introduction to music therapy' session Hosted by Raukatauri Music Therapist Ella Polczyk-Przybyla and myself (Sinead Hegarty) in Hawkes Bay. On Monday we had an insight into a lived experience perspective of 'Working with Visually Impaired Participants', hosted by Kathryn Stevenson from Auckland, who shared her extensive expertise in this area. On Tuesday Raukatauri Music Therapists in Auckland; Rachel Foxell and Luke Stothart, presented on 'Music Therapy in Aged Care', they did a wonderful job in articulating a Music Therapists unique role in this space to offer safety and connection. Finally on Wednesday we had a South Island Powerhouse Panel of Music Therapists; Lauren Payne from Invercargill (Musical Milestones), Renata Kuswanto from Christchurch (Southern Music Therapy) and Emma Matthews from Nelson (The Nest), they shared passionately about 'Music Therapy with Children and Adolescents'. It was great to see these webinars well attended by people from a range of contexts; music therapy students, diversional therapists, speech and language therapists, counselling students + more, a real embodiment of our theme for this year 'Te Poutama Hononga: Weaving Connections'. Links to videos of the sessions can be found on the website (<https://www.musictherapy.org.nz/whats-happening/music-therapy-week-2026-online-sessions/>).

Overleaf is a list of articles and stories that were shared over the week, Ngā mihi kia koutou to everyone who participated, engaged and shared their mahi so generously this year. Music Therapy Week is a wonderful time to plant seeds in the collective consciousness and rejuvenate our passion for what we do and the impact it has on the lives of our participants and communities.

Arohanui e te Whānau,

Sinead Hegarty
Music Therapy New Zealand Student Liaison
and Music Therapy Week co-coordinator





Image description: Collage of posters of some of the amazing events held during Music Therapy Week 2026

Radio

- Music therapy - a journey into sound and mental health interview with Carlos Reigelhaupt Landreani (<https://www.rnz.co.nz/podcast/voices/2026/music-therapy-a-journey-into-sound-and-mental-health>)
- The rehab you have when you're not having rehab - interview with Esther Simpson (<https://www.rnz.co.nz/concert/programmes/three-to-seven/audio/2019030424/the-rehab-you-have-when-you-re-not-having-rehab>)
- Radioactive FM - MTW interview with Rick Berry (<https://www.radioactive.fm/music-therapy-week-interview-with-rick-berry-on-breakfast-14-04-2025/>)
- Community Corner - Music Therapy Week - Interview with Ella Polczyk and Sinead Hegarty (<https://radiohawkesbay.org.nz/explore-programmes-schedule/our-programmes?pid=ff0d6eef-642f-4057-96fd-9001c60f9f3a>)
- 95bFM Your Gig is Showing - interview with Stefan Neville and Chris O'Connor (<https://95bfm.com/bcasts> at 11 April 2026)
- RNZ Culture - Chris O'Connor from Raukatauri Music Therapy Centre (<https://www.rnz.co.nz/national/programmes/culture-101/audio/2019030621/chris-o-connor-from-raukatauri-music-therapy-centre>)
- Plains media - Lilly Middleton and the HAT Colour Choir (<https://plains.org.nz/episode/ec9dd761-bf31-4573-ae38-5e55311fa084>)
- Fresh FM Community Conversations - interview with Emma Matthews (<https://freshfm.co.nz/programme/community-conversations/> at 31 March 2026)

Newspaper

TopSouthNow: Music Therapist open new paediatric space - Emma Matthews

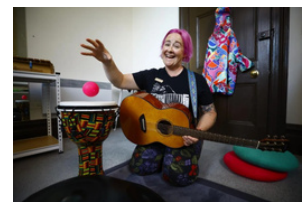
<https://www.topsouthnow.co.nz/news/69b733342313dd451dc3f372>)



Regional News: Circles of Connection - Sophie Sabrie
(<https://www.flipsnack.com/regionalnews/regional-news-issue-265-april-7th-2026> at page 9)



The Press: Music therapist helps children find their voice - Emma Matthews (<https://www.thepress.co.nz/news/360978826/music-therapist-helps-children-find-their-voice>)



Participant Stories



The Post: How making music helps people grow (<https://www.thepost.co.nz/news/360982851/how-making-music-helps-make-people-grow>)

TV Seven Sharp also profiled Eskavan's story (<https://www.tvnz.co.nz/player/tvepisode/seven-sharp-33>)



The Press: The joyful Christchurch Choir for adults with intellectual disabilities (<https://www.thepress.co.nz/culture/360979653/joyful-christchurch-choir-adults-intellectual-disabilities>)



E-Tangata: The magic of music therapy (<https://e-tangata.co.nz/arts/the-magic-of-music-therapy/>)

Music Therapy New Zealand Grants

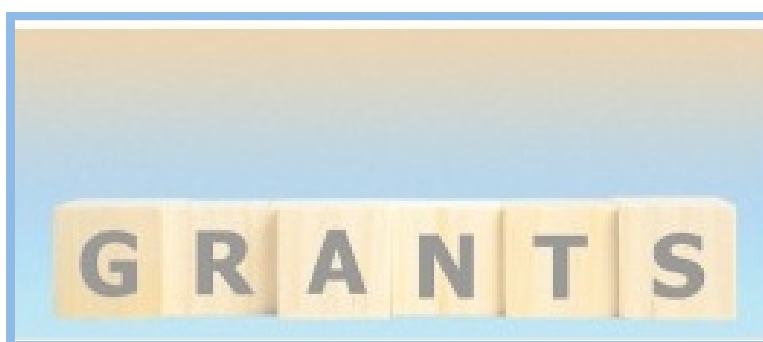
Significant changes have been made to the PGG Fund processes for 2026.

The changes include that all applications will now be to one general fund rather than individual funds, and that applicants will need to show how their project supports MThNZ's Charitable Objectives.

New Guidelines have been released which include new application and reporting forms. The new Guidelines also include guidance about what we do and do not fund. These can be accessed on the website (<https://www.musictherapy.org.nz/grants/>) or downloaded [here](#).

The new PGG Guidelines, application and reporting forms are now in operation. Applications for the current funding round close on 1 May.

Applications for the next funding round will open on 1 September 2026.



Mauri Tui Tuia and North Haven Hospice: Music therapy to support palliative care

Mauri Tui Tuia, in collaboration with North Haven Hospice, has had the privilege of launching a 20-week music therapy pilot service. Starting in September 2025, the trial finished in February 2026, and patients, families, and staff reported substantial and meaningful benefits.

The aim of this pilot was to explore how music therapy can support the emotional, spiritual, and psychological wellbeing of those receiving palliative care in a Whangārei, Tai Tokerau context, while also evaluating how the service fits within the broader clinical team. Sessions were held both at the Inpatient Unit (IPU) and in the community, with 38 face-to-face sessions and additional phone support offered.

Music therapy has given patients opportunities for calm, connection, and creativity during some of their most difficult moments. Patients have used music to relax, reflect on memories, process emotions, and create lasting legacies for loved ones. One patient was thrilled to write a song for her son for Christmas, while another called the hospice just to ask when the therapist would next visit. Nurses observed positive changes in mood, noting that patients seemed more relaxed, uplifted, and engaged after these sessions.

Families have played an important role as well. Many sessions have become shared experiences, with family members singing, talking, or simply spending time together in a soothing environment. Staff found that music therapy helped strengthen family bonds and foster positive feelings, even in times of grief and uncertainty.

Since December, the therapist collected structured data showing benefits across all areas of wellbeing. Patients reported lower anxiety, greater relaxation, and less pain. Music has supported wairua through life review and spiritual reflection, nurtured hinengaro by aiding emotional processing, and reinforced whānau connections through identity, communication, and creating shared meaning.

The service also had a positive impact on the hospice team. During the pilot period, the therapist worked closely with nurses and the multidisciplinary staff, building strong relationships and making meaningful contributions to holistic care, which aligned well with hospice values. Staff appreciated the extra support, especially for patients who were distressed, lonely, or facing complex emotional challenges.

As with any new initiative, there were lessons learned. Limited weekly hours made it hard to maintain continuity with some patients, and community visits could be time-consuming because of travel. There is growing interest in expanding the service to include education for staff, carers, and volunteers, and to raise awareness of music therapy throughout the organization.

Despite these challenges, the service's value was clear. Patients and families consistently showed gratitude, and staff viewed music therapy as an important part of the hospice's holistic approach.

After the initial trial ended, North Haven Hospice and Mauri Tui Tuia worked together to secure funding, allowing the service to expand to two days per week. Both groups continue to actively seek additional support to ensure the ongoing growth and sustainability of this valuable work.

Katie Pureti (NZ RMTh)



Image description: Five people standing on an outdoor balcony and smiling
Left to right: Dr Warrick Jones, Director of Medical Services (North Haven Hospice),
Katie Pureti, NZ RMTh and Executive Director (Mauri Tui Tuia), Zach von Bertouch,
NZ RMTh (Mauri Tui Tuia), Julianne Rose, Family Support Services Manager (North
Haven Hospice), Helen Blaxland, CEO (North Haven Hospice)

Finding Joy and Connection Through Music: A Music Therapy Pilot at Puāwananga Teen Parent Unit

At Puāwananga Wairarapa Young Parents centre, a Teen Parent Unit, Thursday mornings begin with music making, fun and laughter. A pilot music therapy programme led by registered music therapist Pip Algie, (with support from Music Therapy New Zealand), invited young parents and their pēpi to explore music making together. Weekly sessions explored how music can be a pathway to connection, confidence, and wellbeing.

Puāwananga (TPU) provides education and wrap-around support for young parents in the Wairarapa region, and is based on the grounds of Mākoura College in Whākaoriori, Masterton. Working alongside early childhood educators, whānau, and community professionals, Puāwananga creates a nurturing environment where both parent and child can thrive, enabling parents to continue their education whilst caring for their tamariki. Puāwananga's holistic model values learning, wellbeing, and whanaungatanga, helping young families build skills, confidence, and supportive relationships.

Music therapy is the intentional use of music within a therapeutic relationship to support growth, communication, and emotional wellbeing. In Aotearoa New Zealand, registered music therapists are trained to use musical experiences—such as singing, movement, and improvisation—to promote development and support wellbeing.

The weekly group sessions at Puāwananga were guided by the principles of Te Tiriti, and this approach ensured that the programme was collaborative, culturally grounded, and responsive to the voices of young parents. Familiar waiata, children's songs, and gentle improvisation supported whanaungatanga and created a safe, inclusive space for both māmā and pēpi.

Feedback from students reflected themes of joy, belonging, and empowerment. One parent shared, "Singing with you brought me joy. My son loved it". Another said, "I feel happy and part of a family seeing everybody have fun." The emphasis on fun, inclusion, and shared play helped uplift mana and nurture confidence in parenting roles.

For another young parent, music became a bridge to emotional wellbeing. The participant reflected, "I like spending time with my baby. I feel good but tired afterwards. Next time I'd like to do a longer session." These moments of co-regulation, where both parent and child experience calm and connection, are at the heart of therapeutic musical play.

ECE staff connected to Puāwananga also noticed the impact after sessions. They reported that pēpi arrived at the centre more settled and content after the group. This gentle transition from shared music to the childcare environment seemed to contribute to overall emotional security and set the positive tone for the day ahead. This also reflects the philosophy of Te Whāriki, the early learning curriculum, which emphasises belonging (mana whenua), contribution (mana tangata), and wellbeing (mana atua).

The outcomes from this pilot are echoed internationally. Research from the UK and Scandinavia shows that music therapy within this context increases parental sensitivity, supports attachment, and enhances wellbeing for both parent and child (Nicholson et al., 2008; Oldfield, 2016). These findings affirm the potential of music as a relational and developmental tool.

Through musical play, these young parents and their pēpi experience secure, reciprocal relationships and joyful learning together. The Puāwananga pilot demonstrates how music therapy can honour the whole whānau. Through shared music making, young parents and their pēpi nurture a deeper sense of connection, to one another, to their wider whānau and community, and to their own growing confidence as parents.

Pip Algie (NZ RMTh)

References:

Nicholson, J., Berthelsen, D., & Williams, K. (2008). Music therapy and parent-infant bonding: Effects on parental sensitivity and infant wellbeing. *British Journal of Music Therapy*, 22(2), 39–48.

Oldfield, A. (2016). *Parents, infants and music therapy: Music therapy for early bonding*. Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

A report on this initiative has recently been published in the Education Gazette: <https://gazette.education.govt.nz/articles/notes-of-joy-and-connection-exploring-music-therapy-in-a-teen-parent-unit/>



Image description: Person with a guitar
Photo of Pip Algie

Building 'The Nest' in Whakatū

Applying for independent funding for the first time is a significant milestone for any practitioner. For me, this journey began in 2025, navigating the world of grants as a sole trader. Today, as I reflect upon my practice in Nelson, I can see the tangible results of that support and the clinical growth it has fostered.

Building the Foundation

The journey started with seed funding from the Lindgren Fund in early 2025, which supported the purchase of essential instruments that have become the backbone of my clinical sessions. This was followed by crucial support through Ronnie's Fund, facilitated by Peta Wellstead. Her visits to Whakatū to connect with the Nelson Centre of Musical Arts (NCMA) were a pivotal moment of professional encouragement, helping to ground The Nest Paediatric Music Therapy Centre in a physical space.

Innovation and Advocacy

The start of 2026 has been a whirlwind of clinical activity and advocacy. I recently concluded a pilot project supported by Music Helps, focusing on the use of Digital Audio Workstations (DAW) with students at a rural school. This intersection of technology and therapy has opened new doors for how we engage young learners in the digital age.

The community interest in The Nest has been overwhelming, further amplified by the activities of Music Therapy Week. A personal highlight was participating in a panel discussion alongside two fellow music therapists, where we explored the nuances of working with children and adolescents. Engaging in these dialogues—alongside several local interviews—has highlighted a growing awareness in Nelson of the transformative power of music therapy.

Clinical Specialisation and Future Vision

As I continue to develop my practice, I am committed to evolving my clinical toolkit. I am currently preparing to undertake Neurologic Music Therapy (NMT) training. Integrating these evidence-based techniques will allow me to offer even more specialized support for my clients, particularly in neurodiverse populations where rhythm and motor-sensory interventions are so effective.

My practice is rapidly evolving to meet high demand. Beyond direct clinical work, I am supporting outreach students through various schools and agencies and moving into a new service model that includes school-wide consultations paired with ongoing maintenance packages, and telehealth.

When I'm not in a session, I'm in the studio. I am currently in the process of writing and recording, with a new album scheduled for release this July. This creative output remains at the heart of my practice, informing the digital resources and clinical songwriting I share with my clients.

Looking Forward

A Vision for Expansion With the current momentum and the sheer volume of interest from schools and agencies, I am beginning to look toward the next phase for The Nest. The goal has always been to provide high-quality, specialized care to as many young learners in our region as possible. To meet this growing need, I am now exploring the possibility of expansion. The vision is to move from a sole-practitioner model to a collaborative one.

Reflections on Support

Having the right clinical infrastructure—made possible by the PGG and Music Helps—has given me the confidence to provide high-quality care and dream bigger for the future. This journey has taught me that, while funding has empowered me to invest in my identity as an independent practitioner and a leader in my community.

Emma Matthews (NZ RMTh)



Image description: Picture of a nest (logo)

In memorandum

Barbara Mabbett



Image description: Two people sitting holding flower bouquets.
Barbara Mabbett and Marjorie Orchiston celebrating Marjorie's life
membership in 2011

Tribute to Barbara Mabbett, Life Member MThNZ

I was very sad to inform the music therapy community that Barbara Mabbett died on Thursday 15th January 2006.

Barbara was well known as a Wellington editor and writer, and former general manager of Learning Media, the Ministry of Education's publishing division. She also loved music and developed an interest in music therapy in the 1980s, subsequently becoming a highly committed and proactive supporter and advocate of the discipline and the Society. Barbara's skills in specialised writing and professional editing were invaluable to us, especially when she became a National Executive member in 1995 and editor of the music therapy journal in the same year.

In the 1990s Barbara helped us to write unit standards in music therapy for the New Zealand Qualifications Authority; advocate for music therapy training within tertiary institutions; and to determine detailed course content and policy for a Master of Music Therapy programme, documenting the material so it would be readily adaptable to regulation requirements, and in resonance with the Aotearoa New Zealand environment. She helped us to understand copyright laws relating to music therapy practice; edited the music therapists' Code of Ethics and produced a detailed proposal for the establishment of the Registration Board.

She steered rule changes and provided the final documents that preceded the significant restructuring of the Society in 2002; informed us of the implications of the Health Professional Competency Act and prepared the 2006 application for the recognition of music therapists under the act. Phew!

But the above paragraph contains only a brief precis of her phenomenal efforts. I recall with fondness and immense gratitude Barbara's enthusiasm and willingness to help us prepare and present materials to government officials. I particularly remember the work we did together in 2002, after the establishment of the Specialist Education Services (SES) within the Ministry of Education. We met with managers to inform them about music therapy training, registration procedures, the Society's annual journal, and music therapy research in schools; and told them of the work that music therapists were already undertaking in in schools settings. Barbara made a strong case for music therapy to be considered when scoping staffing needs, and for information on music therapy be made available at Group Special Education centres, within online databases and "checklists" of services, and in parent information packs. By 2004, Registered Music Therapists were listed as 'Specialists' in the Ministry of Education's official documentation.

In 1993, Barbara received an MBE for services to Education. She enjoyed reading, writing and editing and her publications varied from resources to support children's literacy including a handbook for teachers (Mabbett, 1996), to a historical account of the life of her great-great Uncle, Samuel Austin, who was awarded the New Zealand Cross in the 19th century (Mabbett, 2011). Amid all this work, Barbara also eagerly received the work of students who were brave enough to request her editing skills.

In my mind, Barbara's 1995 review of a government 'style' book goes some way to summing up her work ethic. The book was published as a guide to the sort of writing that is acceptable for official communications, both in correspondence with the public and in cabinet papers, ministerial briefings and official discussion papers. In her review (Mabbett, 1995), Barbara lists some of the "infelicities" that would typically annoy her: "a semi-colon used where a colon should be; double subjects mismatched with a singular verb; a clutch of misplaced apostrophes; a compound sentence with a comma struggling to do duty for a conjunction..." (np). I confess that I had to check the meaning of "infelicities". I can picture Barbara "Wincing and Reading On" (the title she used for the previously mentioned review) as she read my PhD thesis. Yet alongside her rigor, Barbara was generous and kind, balancing constructive criticism with encouragement and support.

Our Society would not be the effective organisation it is today without the significant contributions of Barbara Mabbett. To acknowledge this, Barbara was awarded Life Membership of Music Therapy New Zealand in 2005. We will continue to be reminded of her involvement as we go on with our work and will hold her in our hearts for many years to come.

Bless you Barbara.

Dr Daphne Rickson ONZM (NZ RMTh)

References:

Mabbett, Barbara (2011). *For Gallant Service Rendered: The Life & Times of Samuel Austin, NZ Cross, 1831-1903*. Wellington: Steele Roberts. ISBN 978-1-877577-71-0.

Mabbett, Barbara (1996). *Exploring Language*. Wellington: Learning Media Ltd. ISBN 978-0-478029-93-2.

Mabbett, Barbara (1995). *Wincing and reading on*. *New Zealand Review of books*. Pukapuka Aotearoa, Winter 1995, Issue 18.

In memorandum

Barbara Wheeler



Image description: One person holding a guitar

Photo of Barbara Wheeler courtesy of World Federation of Music Therapy

In Loving Memory of Barbara Wheeler: musician, music therapist, researcher, educator and friend

This tribute to Professor Emerita Barbara Wheeler, who died in early February 2026 aged 77, gives a personal and professional perspective from Aotearoa on Barbara's rich and expansive contribution to our music therapy communities. Barbara has been a generous and much-loved ambassador for music therapy over a career of more than 60 years, and she is much missed by all of us who have known and loved her. Barbara's story in *The Lives of Music Therapists: Profiles in Creativity* (Vol 2, Profile 51, 2017) edited by Joseph Moreno and John Mahoney has provided contextual information, and the multiple other tributes by international music therapists and friends have guided some thoughts that are included here. I also draw attention to the lively podcast with Luke Annersley, (BAMT podcast 2021), to hear Barbara in her own words. Like many others I felt shocked at Barbara's loss, as she was so active and involved even into her last months. I hope her spirit continues to watch over us, and to inspire and guide. I believe she would like that.

A brief background

Barbara grew up in the 1950s in Nebraska and Wyoming, USA and was nurtured in a musical family. In high school, she played violin (and other string instruments) in quartets, sang in choirs, and learnt the organ at the local Methodist church, accompanying the choir led by her father. Barbara is humorous in the "Lives of Music Therapists" story about her love of the ocean, and that having grown up inland, her choices for college/university and other music therapy training were led by wanting to be close to the sea - she repeats this motif regularly! She originally studied in music education, but felt much more drawn to music therapy, working "most joyfully" she describes with children with complex needs. She studied for her Bachelor and Master's degrees in music therapy at Florida State University (near the ocean) guided in research by lifelong mentor Professor Clive Madsen.

Barbara's story is richly illustrated by her curiosity and love of learning, and following her own research Master's, she practiced in mental health services at Central State Hospital (Georgia) from 1972-74, and later with disabled children and adults, having been inspired by workshops from Paul Nordoff and Clive Robbins in 1973. She later notes that she undertook specific training as a paraverbal therapist (to work with children who were non-speaking) and highly valued her experience of pleasure with the children which she then researched in a qualitative study (Wheeler 1999). She also undertook specialist training in Guided Imagery and Music (GIM) in 1987 and 1995, and then in Neurologic Music Therapy between 2001 and 2008. Thus she brought a wealth of clinical understanding to the teaching of music therapy, for which she is very well known and respected. Barbara

was lecturer - alongside Dr Karen Goodman - for the music therapy Bachelor's programme at Montclair State University 1975-2000, and then went on to found and develop the music therapy programme at the University of Louisville, Kentucky from 2000-2011. Barbara collaborated with colleagues on two volumes of the excellent Music Therapy Handbook (2017), and the co-edited second edition with Mike Viega and Adeline dos Santos (2025) which drew on all her clinical and lecturing work. We have regularly used the first edition as a teaching text at Te Herenga Waka, and proud to be able to use new chapter contributions to the book by fellow New Zealand lecturers Dr Daphne Rickson and Dr Carolyn Shaw with Dr Marin Metell from the 2025 second edition.

Barbara's role as a researcher and writer are another huge part of her contribution to the field, and the magnificent work as convenor and editor-in-chief of two volumes of the encyclopaedic text "Music Therapy Research" Volume 2 (2005), and Volume 3 (2016) with co-editor Kathleen Murphy are perhaps how she is also best known in Aotearoa. We have regularly used her edited and contributed chapters in this authoritative and engaging text to guide our research approaches in NZ.

Personal Connections

Barbara's connections with New Zealand were active and warm, and she was always interested to know how life and work were progressing. I personally first met Barbara at the World Congress of Music Therapy in 1994 in Vitoria-Gasteiz, Northern Spain. We met again in New York with my 7-year-old daughter in 1997, when we were attending a friend's wedding, visiting an aeroplane museum and a local diner. Barbara did a presentation for our students at Guildhall School, London in 2001, and we shared a show at the National Theatre afterwards. After this we regularly had "catch-ups" with Daphne Rickson at WFMT three-yearly world congress events, last meeting her for lunch in Vancouver in 2023.

Barbara came to Aotearoa NZ a few times, and particularly around 2007 to share a workshop in Auckland on developing research, guided by the then new second edition of Music Therapy Research (2004), and organised by her graduate from Montclair State University and New Zealand RMTh, Kathryn Stevenson, and Raukatauri Music Therapy Centre's clinical director Claire Molyneux. Barbara was, along with Daphne and myself, a co-editor for Voices: A World Forum for Music Therapy (between 2006 and 2015) so we shared experiences and collegiality with Barbara there too. Barbara was one of the passionate international voices who were recorded to introduce the 50th Anniversary Conference of MThNZ in September 2024.

I always found Barbara to be very friendly, funny and quirky about life, direct in what she thought, and deeply supportive of people and projects in the music therapy field. Kathryn Stevenson, her former student at Montclair State comments: “ Barbara is someone I knew first as a professor and later as a colleague and friend. I appreciated being able to speak openly with her, and also observed a humbleness in the way she continued to be comfortable learning from others less qualified than herself. She had a nice sense of humour and she just loved her doggies. She will be much missed.”

In conclusion, Barbara noted she was very proud to receive the President’s Award for Outstanding Scholarship, Research, and Creative Activity in Social Sciences in 2008, and the President’s Distinguished Service Award for Service to the Profession in 2010 from the University of Louisville. She was also honoured to receive a Lifetime Achievement Award from the World Federation of Music Therapy in 2017 and a Lifetime Achievement Award from the American Music Therapy Association in 2019. These awards were so richly deserved by the remarkable human that Barbara Wheeler is and was. We remember you with huge warmth and gratitude Barbara.

May you rest in peace.

Assoc. Prof. Sarah Hoskyns (NZ RMTh), Director of MMus Therapy Programme, Te Kōkī, NZSM, Te Herenga Waka, Victoria University of Wellington.

References

- Annersley, L. (2021) BAMT Podcast. Music Therapy Conversations: No. 55, Barbara Wheeler. https://www.bamt.org/DB/podcasts-2/barbara-wheeler?ps=akKLiqL8rgUz00MumM_G-kwe9hA85I
- Moreno, J. (Ed), The lives of music therapists: Profiles in creativity. Vol 2 (Profile 51 – Barbara Wheeler). Barcelona Publishers.
- Viega, M., dos Santos, A. & Wheeler, B.L. (Eds.), (2025) Music Therapy Handbook (2nd Ed). Guilford Press.
- Wheeler, B. L. (1999). Experiencing pleasure in working with severely disabled children. Journal of Music Therapy, 36, 56–80.
- Wheeler, B. L. (2005). (Ed.). Music therapy research (2nd ed.). Gilsum, NH: Barcelona Publishers.
- Wheeler, B. L. (Ed.). (2015). Music therapy handbook. New York, NY: Guilford Press.
- Wheeler B.L. & Murphy, K. (2016) Music Therapy Research (3rd ed.). Barcelona Publishers.

Sir Roy McKenzie Scholarships

Christine Sternegård

Master of Music Therapy student,
Victoria University of Wellington Te
Herenga Waka



Image description: Profile picture
Christine Sternegård

Tēnā koutou

I am so very grateful to have been awarded a Sir Roy McKenzie Music Therapy Scholarship for 2026.

This year I am on placement in a paediatric ward of a general hospital. It has been a wonderful place to learn how music therapy can be utilised in different settings and build on skills I learnt in the first year of the master's programme (which I completed on a part time basis over two years). On placement I am considering the natural weaving in of music therapy in the paediatric ward and through gentle observations and interactions, ascertaining where and how music therapy can best be offered to strengthen and support.

The scholarship has helped me both financially and motivationally. I have been able to purchase a few new instruments, suitable to my placement, as well as books and other resources that will assist me through the placement and research aspects of the course (and beyond!). As a fulltime student with a family and home expenses any financial support is very much appreciated and helps not only with the financial load but with the mental load too. As a music therapy student hoping to start my career soon, it is heartening to feel the support of others who believe in music therapy as much as I do.

Ngā mihi maioha
Christine

Sir Roy McKenzie Scholarships

Anna MacDonald

Master of Music Therapy student,
Victoria University of Wellington Te
Herenga Waka



Image description: Profile picture
Anna Macdonald

I am a part-time Music Therapy Masters student at Te Herenga Waka, Victoria University of Wellington, and am very grateful to have been selected as a recipient of the Deane Scholar Award for Music Therapy, the Sir Roy Mckenzie Scholarship and Lindgren Award 2026.

These scholarships were timely and eased financial pressure leading into the final months of my degree, allowing me to focus on placement, research and professional learning development. As a mature student, new mum and unlikely candidate, I hope anyone reading this who may not fit the usual mould feels inspired to put themselves forward. My placement and thesis have been based around increasing access through hybrid delivery of music therapy to people in prison. If you are curious about this work and would like to read more you can check out p2 of the March 2026 Faculty of Graduate Research (FGR) Newsletter: https://www.wgtn.ac.nz/fgr/workshops-and-development/the-research-room/the-research-room_march-2026-pdf.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my deep appreciation to Music Therapy New Zealand, NZSM VUW Staff and the trustees of the Deane Scholar Award, Sir Roy Mckenzie Music Therapy Scholarship and Lindgren Award for their generosity and contribution to my studies. I feel privileged to undertake this research, and your support has greatly enhanced my student experience.

Sir Roy McKenzie Scholarships

Jenny (Chi-Yun) Lee, NZ RMTh

PhD Candidate
Te Herenga Waka Victoria University of
Wellington



Image description: Profile picture
Jenny (Chi-Yun) Lee

I would like to express my appreciation as a recipient of the Sir Roy McKenzie Music Therapy Scholarship Award, 2026. This scholarship has continued to support me in my PhD journey.

My research interest is around deepening our understanding of the workings of music improvisation and its clinical implications through neuroscience-informed perspectives. I am using a qualitative research design and am about to begin the first action research cycle, which is very exciting!

With this scholarship, I am able to dedicate more time to my studies alongside my clinical work with Southern Music Therapy. I am also reminded of the support behind me as I continue this research pursuit, for which I feel grateful and honoured.

Sir Roy McKenzie Scholarships

Penny Warren, NZ RMTh

PhD Candidate
Te Herenga Waka Victoria University of
Wellington



Image description: Profile picture
Jenny (Chi-Yun) Lee

Tēnā koutou

As I move to the end of my PhD study I am investigating novice music therapists' (Novice MT) clinical and supervisory experiences in their early years of practice I am delighted to have been awarded the Sir Roy McKenzie Music Therapy Scholarship for 2026. This is a significant support towards my PhD research costs and has enabled me to focus more on this work.

I am studying part-time alongside part-time lecturing on MMusTher training. The research journey is stimulating, and my learning supports other aspects of my professional life at the university and in private practice. This journey is only possible with the support of those who are around you and help sustain and guide. My academic supervisors, Dr Daphne Rickson and Dr Sarah Hoskyns have been vital in this alongside family and friends.

Thank you again.

Nāku iti noa, Penny

Global Music Therapy Study

Dear colleagues,

We are delighted to share that our collaborative study—Global Music Therapy Survey 2025: Developments and Trends a Decade Later—has now been officially published in the Journal of Music Therapy (Oxford University Press). You can access the article here (free access):

https://academic.oup.com/jmt/article/doi/10.1093/jmt/thag001/8571397?utm_source=authortollfreelink&utm_campaign=jmt&utm_medium=email&guestAccessKey=6408e6ce-af90-480d-9ecb-a26d45318125

This publication reflects a truly global effort, and we want to extend our sincere thanks to each of you. Your contributions—whether through expertise, feedback, dissemination, or participation—made this work possible. It is a meaningful milestone for our field, and one we share collectively.

We very much hope to see many of you at the World Congress of Music Therapy in Bologna, Italy. We will be presenting the findings as part of the Clinical Practice Commission session on Saturday, July 11 at 2:00 PM, where we will introduce the data and reflect on what it means for the field moving forward.

We would especially value hearing your perspectives and comments—both on the publication and in person at the Congress.

With appreciation and regards,

Dr. Petra Kern with Dr. Daniel Tague and Mr. Puchong Chimpiboon (Chair, WFMT Clinical Practice Commission)



Acknowledgments

MusT is a publication of Te Rōpū Puoro Whakaora O Aotearoa | Music Therapy New Zealand.

Music Therapy New Zealand is a registered charity in New Zealand. As a not-for-profit Music Therapy New Zealand relies on the generous support of donors and members to sustain its activities. A heartfelt thank you to the generous contributions of our friends, affiliates, corporate members and supporters upon which our organisation depends.

